

AQIP ANNUAL UPDATE  
Culture of Continuous Improvement Action Team - 2008

A. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.

Substantial progress has been made toward meeting the objectives of this Action Project, and all of our second year milestones have been achieved. This year, 61 different employees participated in continuous improvement training and on an action project, bringing the total number of employees who have participated on an action team in two years to 167, surpassing our Year 2 milestone of 140 employees.

To help facilitate training and encourage employees to use the philosophies of continuous improvement when they're not involved in an action project, the members of this action team developed a handbook of continuous improvement tools along with specific examples of how each of the tools has been used at the College. This handbook is currently distributed to all action team members, and is available online at: <http://www.insidemcc.mchenry.edu/aqip/resources/cimannual.pdf>

Eight action projects were identified and initiated during the 2007-2008 academic year, and several have implemented improvements which already have resulted in measurable results. For example, an action team that reviewed the College's purchasing procedures worked to reduce the number of authorized purchasers for the College by 76% and insured that all authorized purchasers completing training, resulting in a 53% increase in use of purchase orders, as opposed to the less desirable voucher system, within three months. An action team working on crisis communications procedures researched and recommended the purchase of an emergency mass notification system, as well as designed processes to encourage students to register for the system. Within six months, over 2000 students have registered to receive immediate notification in the event of an emergency.

B. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.

Involving employees in continuous improvement efforts remains at the heart of this Action Project. Over 95% of current administrators, over 50% of full-time staff, and over 33% of full-time faculty have been actively involved in continuous improvement training and have participated on action teams. Furthermore, the MCC's AQIP Steering Committee consists of 12 employees from all areas of the College, including three faculty representatives, three staff representatives, three administrative representatives, one representative from Buildings and Grounds, and the four members of the Executive Council. Detailed information about the College's progress toward creating a culture of continuous improvement is available online at <http://www.insidemcc.mchenry.edu/aqip>

C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project. The planned next steps for this Action Project include sustaining the momentum and enthusiasm that has been generated as a result of our efforts to develop a culture of continuous improvement. Because this project has already involved so many employees, continuous improvement is becoming an expected way of doing business. In the coming year, the College plans to identify seven new action projects and involve 70 additional employees on action projects.

D. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project.

While it was initially difficult to generate momentum for this large-scale effort, this Action Project has become extremely effective in involving large number of employees in continuous improvement efforts at the College. Because any employee at the College may suggest an action project, we have

empowered employees at all levels to identify opportunities to better serve our students and stakeholders. As a result, continuous improvement is not just seen as a requirement for accreditation but as a chance to truly make a difference at MCC. It is very common to hear employees comment, "That sounds like it should be an action project," or "Where is the data to support that?" Continuous improvement has become an integral part of our culture, vocabulary, and business processes.

E. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?

The College is expecting a significant number of employees to retire in 2009, and a potential challenge facing this action project is sustaining the momentum and excitement that has been created over the past two years. Accordingly, it will be important to involve new employees in continuous improvement efforts this year. Fortunately, the work of all of our action teams is thoroughly documented on the College's AQIP website, which will assist MCC in terms of knowledge management and continuity.